

**NORTHUMBRIA POLICE VEHICLE RECOVERY SCHEME (NPVRS)****Joint Report of the Chief Constable, Clerk and Treasurer**

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**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members with a progress report on the central vehicle recovery unit

**2.0 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The police have two separate and distinct powers in respect of defective or abandoned vehicles on a road maintained at the public expense. They have the power to remove the vehicle and the power to arrange for its removal. In exercising the latter power, they are also under a duty to use reasonable care in the choice of an independent contractor or contractors to undertake the work on their behalf.
- 2.2 At the Police Authority meeting held on 26 July 2000 members agreed that a central vehicle recovery unit would be set up within Northumbria Police, to administer the NPVRS. They also agreed to receive a further report assessing the performance of the Unit after the first year of operation (minute 116(ii) 2000/2001).
- 2.3 Under the contractual arrangements recovery operators receive a fee from vehicle owners, insurance companies or the Authority for the recovery, storage and disposal of vehicles, depending on the circumstances.
- 2.4 The Authority receives an administration fee of £15 per vehicle from the recovery operator.

**3.0 CURRENT POSITION**

- 3.1 All administrative, financial and liaison functions in respect of the contract are managed by the central unit, located in the Operational Support Department, Force Headquarters.
- 3.2 The new Northumbria Police Vehicle Recovery Scheme contract commenced on 1 April 2002. Twenty three recovery operators applied for a place on the contract, seventeen of which were successful. All contracted operators were subject to an inspection six months after the commencement of the contract in order to ensure that they were fully compliant with the contract conditions and specifications. Further inspections will take place on an annual basis for the duration of the five year contract. These will be conducted by a scheme representative and an independent health and safety consultant, who is an expert on vehicle recovery issues and industry standards.
- 3.3 At the conclusion of the last financial year, (31 March 2003), the scheme had recovered a total of 9,742 vehicles.

**3.4** Payments made to operators in the final year of the old contract (2001/02) totalled £59,254. In the first year of the new contract (2002/03) they reduced significantly to £51,000, despite changes to the contract provisions.

**3.5** In 2001/02, NPVRS generated an income of £123,324 through the receipt of administration fees of £12 per vehicle. The administration fee has been increased to £15 per vehicle with effect from April 2002, resulting in an income of £144,537 during 2002/03.

**3.6** In addition to the financial benefits outlined above, centralisation of the scheme has produced administrative efficiencies and an improved quality of service to operational officers.

#### **4.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

Nil.

#### **5.0 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

Nil.

#### **6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

**6.1** Since the introduction of the new scheme in April 2002 there has been no significant variation to the original revenue costs previously submitted to the Police Authority at its meeting of 26 July 2000, and there has been no significant variation to the financial surplus achieved.

**6.2** The Treasurer confirms that there are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

#### **7.0 RECOMMENDATION**

**7.1** Members are asked to note the contents of this report.